NEWS RELEASES

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UNITED NATIONS DESIGNATES SASKATOON-CRAIK-REGINA CORRIDOR AS REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERTISE

Environmental education and research in the province will soon reach a new level, due to an important designation announced in Saskatoon today by representatives of the United Nations University.

At a ceremony held at the Meewasin Valley Authority, Charles Hopkins, United Nations University Chair for Education for Sustainable Development at York University, and David Walden, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, designated the Saskatoon-Craik-Regina corridor as a Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

Known as RCE Saskatchewan, the corridor is now recognized by the United Nations as a region within which different Saskatchewan organizations will work together to research, develop and deliver educational programs related to environment and sustainable development. RCE Saskatchewan will also allow these organizations to collaborate with other RCEs around the world that are on the cutting edge of research in sustainability education.

"RCE Saskatchewan now joins more than 30 other RCEs around the world, forming one of the largest and indeed most crucial education, public awareness and training experiments ever undertaken," Hopkins said. "What we learn in these Centres on how to successfully engage the public in this enormous learning undertaking may shape our very existence and will certainly have an impact on our quality of life for generations to come."

RCE Saskatchewan involves a diverse cross-section of governmental and educational organizations in the province, including the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan and SIAST, as well as the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Environment and Environment Canada.

Premier Lorne Calvert, who attended the announcement in Saskatoon, emphasized the importance of sustainable development for the province. "Advancing Saskatchewan's position as a leader in environmental protection and the green economy is one of my government's cornerstones," Calvert said. "This designation means recognition by the world that the people of our province are committed to environmental stewardship."

"Saskatoon is very proud to be a part of RCE Saskatchewan," said Donald

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Atchison, Mayor of Saskatoon. "This initiative will mean communities and organizations throughout the province and the world will be able to work more cooperatively toward a shared goal of a sustainable future."

"The launch of Saskatchewan's Regional Centre of Expertise is an event worthy of celebration and a reminder of our collective responsibility to ensure a sustainable future for coming generations," said Dr. Lawrence Martz, Associate Dean for Social Sciences at the University of Saskatchewan. "Sustainability is one of the guiding principles of the University of Saskatchewan and we are pleased we can play a major role in sustainable development through our education and research activities."

RCE Saskatchewan has identified six key regionally relevant issues on which to focus research and educational activities:

- Climate change;
- Health;
- Farming and local food production,
- consumption and waste minimization;
- Reconnecting to natural prairie ecosystems;
- Supporting and bridging cultures for sustainable living and community building; and,
- Sustainable infrastructure including water and energy.

These issues fall under two cross-cutting themes that will guide RCE participants as they develop and promote their initiatives: sustaining rural communities, and approaches to regional education for sustainable development.

RCE Saskatchewan is one of only four RCEs recognized in North America by the United Nations University, along with Toronto, Sudbury and Grand Rapids, Michigan. There are approximately 35 RCEs worldwide, all of which have been designated by the United Nations University as part of its contribution to advancing the United Nations' "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (2005-2014). Interested individuals and organizations may visit the

RCE Saskatchewan website at www.saskrce.ca. Further information about the United Nations University's RCE program can be found at: http://www.ias.unu.edu/research/regionalcentres.cfm.

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Media, for more information:

Dwight Mercer
RCE Saskatchewan
Phone: (306) 585-1683

Sheri Praski
Manager – Environmental Services
City of Saskatoon
Cell : (306) 536-9075
975-2487

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City of Saskatoon / 222 3rd Ave. North / Saskatoon, Saskatchewan / S7K 0J5

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